

**CITY OF SEDONA, ARIZONA
COUNCIL AGENDA COMMUNICATION**

MEETING DATE: May 25, 2010
AGENDA ITEM: 14
TIME TO PRESENT: 10 minutes

SUBJECT: Discussion/possible direction regarding recent discussions with Arizona Department of Transportation officials regarding the status of the installation of continuous roadway lighting on State Route 89A and the possibility of a route transfer of State Route 89A to the City from the Arizona Department of Transportation.
DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office

ACTION REQUIRED:
☐ Ordinance
☐ Resolution
☐ Motion
☐ Information

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:
☐ Approval
☐ Denial
☒ None Forwarded

Project/issue relates to Strategic Goals and Priorities ___ or Community Plan x or Not Applicable ___.

Community Plan – Page 7-19 states: *Since SR 89A is controlled by ADOT, all modifications must be approved by and coordinated with ADOT, including the installation of access points and new traffic signals. It is recommended that the City seriously evaluate the implications of assuming responsibility of this roadway within the City limits where it may be necessary to achieve community goals that may be otherwise difficult to achieve. This would then give the City authority over improvements and the direction of future modifications, including, but not necessarily limited to access control, pedestrian and aesthetic improvements, medians and transit stops.*

ISSUE: The Mayor, Councilor Elect Barbara Litrell, and the City Manager met with Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Director John Halikowsky and other ADOT staff last week to discuss the SR 89A lighting project and possible turnback. This agenda item is to share the information to the Council and receive possible direction for staff.

BACKGROUND: On May 18, the Mayor, Councilor Elect Littrel, and city staff met with John Halikowsky, Director of ADOT and other ADOT staff to discuss the status of continuous roadway lighting. Mayor Adams and Councilor Elect Littrel again expressed concern about the lighting project and that the recently-elected Council members are opposed to the project. They urged ADOT officials to set aside the lighting project and work with the new City Council on other pedestrian safety alternatives.

During the meetings, ADOT staff stated that continuous roadway lighting on State Route 89A would be put on hold if the City were to commit to a route transfer. They also informed the City representatives that if the City committed to a route transfer, they would be willing to provide funding sufficient to maintain the roadway for a period of ten years, and provide a specified amount of funding that could be used by the City for improvements on State Route 89A. Also, ADOT would complete the overlay project, install the signal at Andante, install the signal at Airport Road, and also tentatively agreed to improve other projects identified by staff during the meetings. The overlay project and the traffic signals would all be completed by ADOT prior to them implementing the transfer. ADOT has stated these figures are negotiable. Staff requested that ADOT provide this information in writing, but the City has not yet received their letter.

If the Council would like to pursue the route transfer, ADOT informed staff that it needs a decision from the City by mid-August, at the latest. If the City does not make a decision, ADOT will continue moving forward with the lighting project.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND: On October 14, 2008, the City Council directed staff to *“request ADOT fund an independent route transfer study that will evaluate all the issues and costs involved with a turnback of the west SR 89A corridor.”* Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has completed the attached route transfer study and it is being presented to City Council for review, comment and direction.

The route transfer study included the following information:

- Roadway design standards applicable to the subject roadways.
- Drainage issues that were identified.
- An analysis of existing and future traffic operations.
- Discussion of proposed improvement projects along the SR 89A corridor and associated costs.
- Discussion of maintenance issues.
- Discussion of crash history.
- Outline of the route transfer process.

The report identified several recommended projects in the SR 89A segment area with an estimated cost of approximately \$8,060,000. These included ADOT projects that are already underway, along with about \$585,000 in future projects that are identified as primarily City of Sedona responsibility. The annual maintenance cost for the roadway, estimated at approximately \$63,990 per year in 2009 dollars, do not account for an annualized cost for these improvements.

The Route Transfer Study did not focus on long-term costs and considerations for the roadway that would be the responsibility of the City. Some of the issues include:

- The City would have full responsibility for the liability of the road
- The City would bear the responsibility of any future pavement rehabilitation/rejuvenation projects. For instance ADOT has programmed \$3,800,000 for the pavement preservation work scheduled for proceeding after July 2010. (Preservation work is sometimes referred to as pavement overlay, or remove and replace, whereas rejuvenation would include activities such as crack sealing and other activities to extend the time between overlays, or remove and replace work.) Typically an overlay project such as the one planned by ADOT will last approximately fifteen years if the road is properly maintained.
- Staff may experience greater public demand than present for routine maintenance activities on SR 89A because of proximity of control of the roadway.
- The City bears the responsibility of any improvements – turn lanes or intersection realignments. Studies that have been conducted identify several intersections that will operate at Level Of Service F based on future traffic projections for the year 2025. (Soldier Pass Road Area Traffic Study Chapter 4 and Verde Valley Transportation Study Level of Service Map)
- The City bears the responsibility for the Brewer and “Y” Roundabout intersections
 - The “Y” will remain an “F” rated intersection on weekends despite 179 improvement project
 - City will retain all responsibility for any improvement to traffic flow at the “Y.” or other intersections

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION(S): Not applicable

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE: The complete financial implication of a route transfer is unknown at this time and will be analyzed and evaluated if the route transfer process and negotiations proceed. The completed route transfer study does include financial information pertaining to planned improvement projects along the SR 89A corridor and roadway maintenance costs.

PROS & CONS:

Pros of a route transfer:

- The City would have greater control over SR 89A.
- The City would have greater flexibility regarding future improvements for SR 89A.
- May allow for more timely response for maintenance and citizen inquiries.
- The route transfer would be accomplished in lieu of continuous roadway lighting.
- SR89A currently has many characteristics of a City arterial and it may make sense to begin treating the road as a City arterial.

Cons of route transfer:

- Increased operation and maintenance costs.
- May impact the City's ability to maintain and rehabilitate other public roadways.
- Potentially diminishes the City's ability to consider acceptance of public non-maintained or private roads.
- The City would likely be required to upgrade all public facilities (currently ADOT) along SR 89A to current American's with Disability's Act (ADA) standards and incur the financial and legal responsibility for this aspect of the roadway facility.
- Reduces City ability to negotiate for cost participation from ADOT regarding improvements the City may initiate.
- Increased liability.
- Costs related to a road having regional significance would be borne by the City.
- Greater impact on staff resources.

INTERNAL PROCESS PERSPECTIVE: Impacts on staff resources are likely to increase and the current overlay/street rehab program would likely change.

CITY ATTORNEY APPROVAL: [reviewed 5/20/10 RCR]

CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION: It appears that there are four primary alternatives for City Council to consider regarding the controversy surrounding continuous roadway lighting on State Route 89A:

1. **Continue to put pressure on ADOT to consider other pedestrian safety alternatives consistent with the Pedestrian Advisory Committee recommendations, including funding and construction of the improvements.** ADOT has been unwilling to consider any other alternatives to continuous roadway lighting due to concerns about safety and liability, funding, and the unknown amount of time it would take to come up with a new concept to which ADOT and the City would agree.
2. **Commit to a route transfer and begin negotiations with ADOT for construction of improvements associated with a route transfer, provision of sufficient funding for maintaining the road for a specified period of time, and provision of sufficient**

funding for the City to construct other pedestrian safety alternatives. After numerous discussions with State and ADOT officials up to and including the Governor's Office, it appears that the only alternative to continuous roadway lighting that ADOT is willing to consider is a route transfer. ADOT has indicated that it will commit to complete the overlay project, traffic signals at Andante and Airport Road, and provide an unspecified amount of funds for the City to make pedestrian safety improvements and perform maintenance. If the City elected this alternative, ADOT would need a commitment from the City no later than mid-August. ADOT has stated it would complete the overlay project and the traffic signal prior to turning over responsibility of the road to the City. ADOT estimates that these projects will be completed by July of 2011.

3. **Do nothing.** Doing nothing would result in ADOT proceeding with the construction of continuous roadway lighting and the construction of the traffic signal at Andante
4. **Take legal action to try to prevent ADOT from moving forward with the lighting project.** The City's legal counsel will need to brief City Council on the advantages and disadvantages of this option.

FINANCIAL SERVICES APPROVAL: Not applicable.

MOTION(S):

No motions are recommended. Staff is asking for direction from City Council on the preferred alternative. However, if City Council is interested in pursuing a route transfer, it is recommended that staff be directed to develop some cost estimates for pedestrian safety alternatives solely for the purpose of negotiating with ADOT for funding for the improvements. The cost estimates would assume pedestrian safety alternative being completed to the greatest extent possible so that financial parameters could be established for negotiations. No design concept would be included as part of the cost estimates. The actual design would be done at a later date.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Final Draft of the Route Transfer Study